

The Hope of a Future Life, the sole Foundation of a Christian's Happiness.

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S E R M O N

PREACH'D at the

F U N E R A L

Of the Reverend

SIDRACH SYMSON, D.D.

Late Rector of *Stoke-Newington*, in the
County of *Middlesex*, November the 9th 1704.

By *LUKE MILBOURN*, Rector of *St Ethelburga's*, and Lecturer of *St. Leonard's Shoreditch*.

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The Hope of a more perfect Union

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I COR. xv. 19.

*If in this Life only We have Hope in Christ,
We are of all Men most miserable.*

IN The Beginning of this Chapter the *Apostle*, as a Motive to their Steadiness in the Christian Faith, gives the *Corinthians* a *Summary* of that *Doctrine* which He had Preach'd among them, not without taking Notice of that *Authority* by which He Preach'd. *I deliver'd to you first of all*, says He, *That which I also receiv'd, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, i.e.* I have given you the same Truths which I had receiv'd from Heaven before, and have Preached to you the Sufficiency of that Sacrifice which has been offer'd for Sin in the Death of *Jesus Christ*, such a Sacrifice, as without which the Sins of a guilty World could never have been remitted, and consequently without which, Salvation could never have been attained.

Ver. 3.

Again, *I have delivered to You, that, the same Jesus Who died was Buried, and that He rose again the Third Day according to the Scriptures.* Where, by the Scriptures which He refers to, I don't understand the Writings of the *Evangelists*, and that History which they give of the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of *Christ*; for at the Time of St. Paul's Writing this Epistle, some of the *Gospels* were not written at all, and those which were written were of so small an Age, that their Authority was yet to be clear'd to the World by the same Methods, as that *General Doctrine* Preach'd by the Apostles was; but by the *Scriptures* I understand the Books of the *Old Testament*, by which the Apostles demonstrated

Ver. 4.

to all Persons the Truth of *Christ's Messiahship*, and the Necessity of his Death, Burial, and Resurrection in particular, That He might fill up the Character of the *true Messiah*, according to those things which had been predicted of him there : For all Pretences to bring the *glad Tidings of Salvation* to a perishing World, had been vain and impertinent, had not all which was delivered by the Preachers been dictated by the same Spirit, and agreeable to the Declarations of *Moses* and the *Prophets*.

When St. Paul mentions the *Resurrection of Christ*, He insists so far upon it as to shew, That the *Truth of the whole Christian Faith* depended upon that ; *Christ* had died in vain, the Reality of his Death had been Confirm'd by his Burial to no purpose, if He had not *risen* again ; He had been no greater than our *Modern Unitarians* make him, the *Son of God* only by a Figure, the true *Messias* not at all ; his Death no more an *Attoning Sacrifice* for Sin, than that of any innocent Infant, if He had not had *Life in Himself*, if He had not risen again from the Dead by *his own Act* as well as his *Father's* : And this Doctrine St. Paul presses the more Home both on the *Corinthians* and others, both because the *Jews* who endeavoured, with a Malicious Industry, to hinder the Progress of the Gospel, Denied the *Resurrection of Christ* in Particular, attempting to abuse the World with that senseless Story, *That He had been still in the Grave where they had laid Him, but that His Disciples came and stole him away by Night, while the Guard slept*. And because there were some who denied that there was any *Resurrection at all*, with whom he argues, unanswerably, in the following Parts of the Chapter.

Now, to Occur to both these Errours, the *Apostle* proves the Truth of our *Saviour's Resurrection*, not only by the Scriptures — that *Thus it was written, and that thus*

thus it behoved the Christ to Suffer, and to Rise from the Dead the Third Day—but, by a great many Eye-Witnesses; and therefore He tells them, that Christ appear'd first to Cephas, then to the Twelve, After that He was seen of above Five Hundred Brethren at once, After that He was seen of James, then of all the Apostles again, and many of these were Witnesses still living, and not only steady in the Affection of what they had seen, but every Day ready to lay down their Lives in Confirmation of this Truth; — And last of all, says He, *He was* Luk. xxiv. 5, 6, 7, 8. *seen of me also, as of One born out of due time.*— And now, *If every Truth was to be Established by the Mouth of Two or Three Witnesses,* Who, but Men of an unaccountable Obstinacy, could oppose any thing to the Testimony of so many living, pious, sober, and really irreprovable Witnesses?

After this the Apostle brings the Matter more close to the Corinthians, since it was among themselves that some were found, *Who said there was no Resurrection at all.* Ver. 19. He then argues, “ If there be no Resurrection of the Dead, then No Body at all Can rise, If it be Impossible that any should Rise, then Christ is not Risen; And if Christ is not Risen, then He's not the *Messias* He pretended to be, but a Cheat and Impostor, and all our Preaching is vain, and your Faith is vain, for we Preach and you trust in a Saviour who is no Saviour at all. Therefore, as He adds, *We appear plainly to be false Witnesses, attesting that of God which is not true,* for We have testify'd of God, that He has rais'd up Christ, and upon that Foundation, We have endeavour'd to make You Believe in him as so rais'd, *but God has not, cannot have rais'd him at all, if the Dead rise not at all,* or if there be no Resurrection.

The great End of our Belief in Christ is, that through him we may obtain *Remission of our Sins.* We believe He has.

has purchased that Remission for us by the shedding of his own most precious Blood; and We doubt not but that if our Faith in *Christ* is sound and steadfast, Our Sins are really done away, so as the Guilt of them shall never be charged upon Us, by the Merits of his Death and Passion; and with this Confidence we Comfort our selves under the Presence of the present Life; but *if Christ be not risen*, all this Hope and Confidence is no better than down-right Madness: Alas! Our Condition's as bad as it was before we Believed, *We are yet in our Sins*, We lie under so dreadful a Guilt, that We must bear what ever Punishment an Infinite Angry Being can inflict upon Us; and not only *We*, who are yet alive, are without any Mediatour to Interpose between Eternal Vengeance and Us, but *all those who are fallen asleep*, those who have died a Natural Death in the Profession of Faith in *Christ*, and those who have died by the Cruelty of Persecutours, after all their gay Hopes of Happiness, have really perished for Ever.

The Words of the Text are a *Conclusion* drawn from what the *Apostle* had said before, and an Introduction into his following Arguments, whereby He demonstrates the *Truth and Certainty* of the Resurrection. — *If in this Life only we have Hope in Christ, We are of all Men most miserable.* — There's Nothing in the Words that needs Explication, I shall therefore Observe from them these things.

I. That *all Religion in General is supported by a certain Hope of Happiness.*

II. That *Those Who Profess the Christian Religion in Particular are supported only by Hope in Christ.*

III. That *the Christians Hope in Christ has a Peculiar Respect to the Resurrection to Eternal Life, and Glory by and through him.*

IV. That

IV. That without such a Hope in Him, the Christian is the most miserable of all Mankind.

I. All Religion in General is supported by a certain Hope of Happiness. Mankind fallen from their State of Innocence, are not generally so far stupify'd but that they have some Sense of the *Existence of a God*, and of their *own Misery*; Their Sense of these things fills them with abundance of Fears; In their *Innocent State* they were obliged to *Worship* and *Obey* their Maker because He did them Good; In their *fallen State* they are under the same Obligations that He may divert Evil from them, and not punish them as He can and They have deserv'd. Now this Worship and this Obedience, when put into any *Form*, or regulated by any *particular Scheme*, whether by *particular Men* or *whole Societies* for their own Use, is *Religion*; and this *Religion* is of several kinds, according to the *different Schemes of Worship or Obedience*, which different *Persons* or *Societies* prescribe to themselves.

All the World is convinced that *Innocent Man* was, and always must have been happy in the *Favour* and *Fruition* of his *Maker*, for as a *Being infinitely perfect* could never make any thing but what was *Good*, so such a *Being* could not but Love what He had so made, and He could not change or withdraw his Love from what had been created Good, unless its Nature was Corrupted and so became disagreeable to the Nature of its Maker. Man was so corrupted by Sin, but a Sense of his Corruption, as it made him apprehensive of *Punishment*, so it made him not only desirous to escape *that*; but, if it might be possible, to retrieve that Happiness again which He was excluded from by Sin; He knew He deserved God's Hatred, but He heartily wish'd for his Love, and therefore, so far as He was able to Govern his own Thoughts

Thoughts, and to be serious in the weightiest Matter in the World : He was sure that He must still Worship that God whom He had Offended, and Obey him with the utmost Exactness, against whose Prescription He had before trespass'd, to the ruin of himself and his Posterity.

If Pardon were not to be obtain'd, *Desperate Mankind* would never trouble themselves about *Obedience* or *Adorations* due to God : They'd know, that what God would have them *to do*, they *must do* in spite of all their Reluctance against his Will ; but, as for any voluntary and chearful Service, for any Acknowledgments of his Goodness in giving them a Being and preserving them in it ; for any *Honour* or *Adorations*, any *Supplications* or *Prayers* to be made, as they'd be sure they were to no purpose, so such things would never enter into their Thoughts. And this is the Condition of the *fallen Angels*, they know their Crimes are Irremissible, that there's no Possibility of *Redemption* for them from those eternal Chains of Darkness which they are now confin'd to ; What God Commands them they *do*, because they can't resist his Will, what *Evils* they are permitted to do, they do them with the utmost Eagerness, only that they may shew that Hatred which they have against all the Workmanship of God. And while those *Blessed Spirits* who have been preserved in their first State by the Power of their Maker, are employ'd in singing *Hallelujahs* to him who *Lives for Ever and Ever*, these *wretched Spirits* spend themselves in nothing but endless *Cursings* of their *Creator* and *themselves*, and never offer up so much as a single Wish for that Happiness which they have lost, and which, by their continued Rebellions, they'd render, if it might be, more irrecoverable.

But a *Pitying God*, upon very different Reasons, reveal'd his *Mercy* to *Mankind* ; for the present *Remission* of deserv'd

deserv'd Punishment, and the *Promise* of future Happiness in a *Messias*, being made known to *Adam*, was by him equally Imparted to all his Children; and by them to all their Posterity wherever dispersed through the World. By this Revelation a *total Despair* was prevented; And, when a glympse of Hope appear'd to poor despondent Creatures, they were ready to make use of the most likely means to atone their God; Hence they came to offer up *Sacrifices of Creatures which had Life* to God, and Express'd, by that Action, the Expectation they had of an *All-sufficient Propitiation* to be one Day made for them; And when those, whose *Hearts God had touch'd*, observ'd the growing Depravation of their Brethren, though they had before contented themselves with *Family-Religion, or a Private Method of Divine Worship* wherein none met but *Cohabiting Relations*; then, as a Means to Retrieve the Honour of God, and to remind them again of their better Hopes, they settled among themselves a Method of *publick Solemn Worship*, by distinguished Officers in *Numerous Congregations*: which was about the time that *Enos* was born to *Seth* the Son of *Adam*, and this I take to be the Meaning of *Moses* in that Passage.—Then began Men to call upon the Name of the Lord.—Tho' I know that several of the *Jewish Rabbins*, and particularly *Maimonides*, puts another Construction upon the Words.

Gen. iv.
26.

But thus Men were brought to understand that their *lost Happiness* might be recover'd again; And hence, notwithstanding the strange Encrease of Ignorance, yet the Nature and Tendency of the Soul was very obvious to all, and therefore by the *outward Shew of Religion*, (for the Heart in these Cases is Inscrutable,) they made known to One Another their *Hopes* of it; And though their *Schemes of Worship* were very different and every parti-

cular Society valued their own beyond that of any *Others*, yet None of them ever question'd but that the *general Design* of them *all* was the *same*; and it may be all their Pleas were alike good, except in the *Holy Line*, till such time as God gave *his Laws*, in a more peculiar Manner, to the *Seed of Jacob*, and perfected that *rougher Model* in that *Light and Truth* which was made known to Mankind *by the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, and this brings us to the

2. Second Observation. That *Those who Profess the Christian Religion in particular, are Supported only by Hope in Christ*. Where, if we consider Matters rightly, We must confess, that *the Religion of truly pious Men was always the same*; and though such, from the Beginning of the World, were not call'd *Christians*, yet they really were *Christians*. A Christian has his Name from Believing in Christ so as to depend upon Him only for Salvation; And such a One was *Adam*, whose *Faith* was fixt in, and whose *Hope* depended upon that *Seed of the Woman who was to Break the Serpent's Head*; Such were *Abel*, *Seth*, and *Enoch*, and the rest, who, before the Flood, kept close to the Service of the true God. So again, *Abraham* and the succeeding *Patriarchs* Believed in that *Seed in which* it was promised that *all the Nations of the Earth should be Blessed*, and that *Seed was Christ*.

As the *Sacrifices*, and all the *Orders of Divine Service* before the Law, had a particular Regard to this *Promised Seed*, so all the *Typical Ceremonies* appointed by the *Law of Moses* had a more direct and obvious Relation to him: So that as the *promis'd Messias* was the Object of their *Faith*, the *Reconciliation* to be made *between God and Man* by his Merits, was the Ground of their *Hope*. So the *Original Jews* and those that were *Profelytes* to their Law, could no oftener assist at their *Stated Devotions* and

and *Sacrifices*, but it must put them in Mind of *that* *Messias* in whom they *Believ'd*, and through whom their *Hope* was kept alive.

Now *this same Christ, the Shiloh, the Promis'd Seed*, was exhibited to the World in the *Fulness of Time*; And as He *did*, and as He *suffer'd* according to the Ancient Predictions of Him, and according to the Expectation of those who trusted in him before his Incarnation, so, upon the Agreement of *Actions* and *Sufferings* with those *Prophecies*, Those to whom *Jesus*, now having appear'd, was Preach'd, and to whom He was Prov'd to be the *Messias*, either by *Miracles* or *Discourses*, Receiv'd him as their *Saviour*, Believ'd in him as able to make good that Character; and as He, for the *Justification* of their *Faith*, had been rais'd from the Dead, so their *Hope* and *Confidence* that He would *Save all them to the uttermost who should come to God by Him*, made them not ashamed; But as the *Hope* of the *Eldest Patriarchs* and of the *Later Pious and Faithful Jews*, so the *Hopes* of those who embraced the *Gospel of Christ*, could not be shaken by any Industry or Artifice of the Enemies of Humane Happiness.

The *Ancients* then were *Christians* indeed, those *Who Believed in Christ, now made Flesh and Executing his Office*, were *Christians* indeed, and in *Name and Title* too; The *Former* had the most Difficulties in point of *Assurance* to Contend with, because they look'd upon things at a distance, which, on that Account, appear'd Dark and *Obscure*: The *Latter* had the greater Difficulties to get the Mastery of in point of *Perseverance*; because the Devil who had not been able to discern the *Nature and Power* of the *Promis'd Messias* before, Now He came to *know his Person*, and to *feel his Power*, Exerted his Malice against Him, and his Gracious

Design, and his happy Followers with the most Indefatigable Assiduity and Vigour. But still *Those* did, and *These* do *Hope in and Depend upon him*, and Him only, for whatsoever Good they are Capable of.

For, *True and Sound Religion* only is *true Wisdom*, and as the embracing such Religion either argues a *Natural* or an *Infus'd* Sagacity, such as arises from the *Constitution of the Person*, or from the *Grace of God*, so those who did addict themselves most to the Conduct of sound Religion, grew most in Grace and in real and useful Knowledge. Thus the *Members of the Church* before the Flood understood their own lost Condition by Sin better than the rest of the *Unthinking World*; The *Posterity of Abrahams by Isaac* were wiser than their *Neighbours*, and grew so, as those before them did, by means of those Revelations which God made of himself to them; And from the Days of our Saviour's Converse upon Earth. *Not many Great, not many Noble, not many Wise are call'd*, yet those who are *Effectually Call'd*, by acting agreeably to their *Holy Calling*, grow *Wise*, and improve in Understanding. They are not, it may be, *Worldly Politicians* nor *acute Philosophers*, but they know *Christ and him Crucified*, whom pretended *Philosophers and profound Politicians and Statesmen* are generally Unacquainted with.

Those who are *Religiously Wise*, as they know *Christ*, so they know *themselves* best, and Consequently, they are sure they can have no Ground of Hope in and of themselves. They know themselves to be miserable Sinners, and their God to be a Pure and Holy Being who cannot endure Sin; They know that it is not in themselves to Direct their own Way, or to Cleanse themselves from that Guilt which they are tainted with. That it's God alone who
can

can turn their Hearts, that it's He alone who can take away their Sins, and justify them from all those terrible Punishments which the Law of rigid Justice would inflict on them, therefore they look without themselves, and what is their *Hope*? Truly *their Hope is only in Christ*: They are taught by the Rules of *Sound Religion* to look up to *Him*, Who was *Holy, Harmless, and Undefil'd*, though themselves are *Sinners*; Who is *Powerful*, though themselves are *Weak*, Who is *touch'd with a Sense of our Infirmities*, though they are many, and being appointed by his *Father* to be the great *Mediatour* between himself and us, is, by *Him*, made to as many as Love *Him*, *Wisdom, Righteousness Sanctification and Redemption*. Such a *Saviour* We may *Hope* in, and by so Doing, may *Attain the End of our Hope even the Salvation of our Souls*; which is the Substance of our

Third Observation, viz. *That the Christians Hope in Christ has a Peculiar Respect to the Resurrection to Eternal Life and Glory through Him*. Death, both Temporal and Eternal, is the proper Wages of Sin; but *Death Eternal* is called the *Second Death*, not as if in *that* the Soul and Body should be for ever separated One from Another, in which *Separation Natural Death* Consists; but because there will then be an *Eternal Separation* between the Soul and God, and that *Hope of Happiness* which, before *Death*, it may in some Measure be supported by; *that Hope* indeed dies for ever: And even *Annihilation* it self, however desirous a *Sinner*, condemn'd by his own Conscience, might be of it, is a Blessing too great to be obtain'd: such a Blessing as the Soul never dreams of, because it is *Infallibly assur'd* it's impossible to be attained. God is never so far reconcil'd to a *Sinner dying Obstinate and Impenitent*,

3.

nitent, as to put an End to those Punishments He has brought upon his own Head, by bringing him to Nothing.

But notwithstanding this *Second Death*, the Body and Soul of the *greatest Sinner* shall be re-united at the general Resurrection as well as those of the *Holyest Saints and Martyrs*. For *We must all appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ*, there to give an Account of what we have done in the *Flesh*, whether it be Good or whether it be Evil. The *Sinner* is no more capable of feeling those everlasting Fires prepared for the Devil and his Angels, unless He's raised from the Death of Nature at the last Day, than without being so raised, *The Pious and Holy Man* can receive the Kingdom prepared for him from the beginning of the World.

That the *Jews* had a *Notion of the Resurrection* is very plain from a great Number of Passages in *David's Psalms*; From the Declaration of *Job*, when under the greatest Agonies of his Sufferings: From the remarkable Expressions of *Eleazar*, and the *Holy Mother*, and *Seven pious Sons* who died by such exquisite Torments under the *Tyranny of Antiochus*, from the Declaration of *Martha* when she went to meet the *Blessed Jesus* after the Death of her Brother *Lazarus*; and from that Zeal which the *Pharisees* shewed in the *Jewish Council* to Defend *St. Paul* when He had told them that *He was called in Question for the Hope of the Resurrection of the Dead*, and calls it elsewhere, *The Hope of their Fathers*. But whether the *Hope of any Resurrection at all* did not depend entirely upon the coming of the *Messias*? may be no improper or impertinent Question.

I must Confess it's my Opinion that it does; for it had been easy with Almighty God to have permitted

mitted all Mankind as Sinners, at the Conclusion of their appointed Time of Continuance here, to have sunk Bodies and Souls immediately into everlasting Torments, and so have superseded the Necessity of a Resurrection. But the *Merciful Determination of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost* toward Mankind, must have been *coæval* with his *Will to create Man*, endued with such Mental and Corporeal Powers as He in time bestow'd upon Him, *i. e.* It must have been *Eternal*; and Consequently, both the *Necessity of a Resurrection* of dying Mankind, and the *Means of bringing that Resurrection to pass*, must have been founded in that *Pre-determination*. And so *Christ, the Messiah*, coming into the World, according to the *Original Will of himself, his Father, and the Blessed Spirit*, brought the *certain Knowledge of Life and Immortality* into the World. For tho' *particular Favourites of God*, both among the *Jews and Others*, might have peculiar and unquestionable Notices of this Resurrection given them, yet they were taught to expect it only; by *that Messiah* whose *Day they saw* so long before, and though the *Generality of those People* whose *Religious Schemes* Drew near to, or were Borrow'd from those of the *Jews*, expected it from the same Hand; And though *Several* were *rais'd from the Dead* by the *Prophets* before the Coming of our *Saviour*, and by *himself* during his own Life, Who died again afterwards as other Men did; yet the *Truth and Manner* of this Resurrection, was never Evident to *all* Observing Persons, and put beyond Doubt to *All*, till, by our *Saviour's Rising from the Dead of himself*, it Appear'd, that *As the Father had Life in Himself, so He* Joh. v. 26 *had given to the Son, as He was Man, to have Life in Himself.*

Now.

- Joh. v. 21. Now hence it comes to pass, that, *As the Father raiseth up the Dead and Quickeneth them, even so the Son Quickeneth whom He will.* And hence He had Authority to Declare as He did.—*The Hour is coming and Now is, when the Dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and They that Hear shall Live,* Which Expression has Another more mysterious Meaning too ;
- v. 28. 29. And again, — *The Hour is Coming in which all who are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth, They who have done Good to the Resurrection of Life, and they who have done Evil to the Resurrection of Damnation.* — All Men then, Those who are Damned, as well as those who are sav'd for Ever, owe their Resurrection out of their Graves, and the Re-union of their Souls and Bodies to the Voice and Power of the Son of God ; And to Him, with this Power of Raising and presenting them before their great Tribunal, *He has*
- v. 27. *given Authority to execute Judgment also because He is the Son of Man.*

Now this Power of Raising and Judging, and consequently, of Rewarding and Punishing those who Appear before his Judgment-Seat, is the sole Comfort and Support of poor repenting Sinners who Believe in Christ. They know that when the dreadful Trumpet Sounds, and the Sleeping Dead awake at the awful Voice of the Son of God, they have Reason to lift up their Heads with Joy, as knowing that the Day of their Redemption then draws nigh. And what can give them greater Satisfaction of their Judge's gracious Designs toward them, than that Assurance

Joh. v. 24. *which He has given them ? Verily, Verily, I say unto You, He who Heareth my Word, and Believeth on Him who sent Me, hath Everlasting Life, and shall not come into Condemnation, but is passed from Death to Life.* —

Glory

Glory and Happiness with Christ is justly call'd *Life* in opposition to that *Second Death*, of which I gave You an Account before. It has been long observ'd, that it scarce deserves the Name of *Life*, to linger out our tedious Years in continual Pains, and Sorrows, and Weaknesses; but to Live indeed is to be Strong, and Vigorous, and Healthy, both in Body and Mind; and it's the Expectation of *such a Life*, which makes a Man go on undaunted through all the Sufferings incident to Mortality, and a Promise they have to that purpose to build their Hopes upon, viz. that *God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eye*, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying; neither shall there be any more Pain. — This Happy *Life*, this Glorious Rest, our Dear Redeemer has purchas'd for us, at the highest Rate; In all the Afflictions of his People He's Afflicted with them, but as He, *having endured the Cross and despis'd the Shame, is now set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God*, so He'll Exalt all those who Suffer for his Name sake, nay all those who run with Patience that Race which is set before them, be it more Easy or more Difficult, to the same Place — that where He is, we may be also. — This Christ is He who dwells in the Hearts of all those who Love him, by Faith; He, by his Spirit, Quickens, Enlightens, Saves Us, and previously to that Salvation, is, while we live here in his Service — *Christ in us* the Col. i. 27. *Hope of Glory.*

4. *If it were not for the Support of this Hope, sound Christians would be of all Men the most miserable; We call those Miserable, who lose that Good which they might have enjoy'd, and suffer those Calamities which they might have avoided; and whatever the Nature of Real Good is, Men esteem that only Good which is*

the great End of their own Desires. Those who may participate of all Worldly Pleasures freely; Who may, by virtue of their large Worldly Circumstances, indulge themselves in every thing which pleases the Eye, or affects the generality of Mankind, and yet pass all these by; Such are Enemies to their own Ease and Self-Enjoyment; Those who are Prisoners when they might be free: Poor when they might be Rich; Exiles when they might live in their own Countries; the Off-scouring, when they might be the Favourites of Mankind, and who Die even by exquisite Torments, when they might live quietly and without any Outward Trouble and Vexation, &c. such Persons fall under those Troubles which they might have escaped; And Men who terminate their Desires here below, reckon those who are in such Circumstances, the most miserable Creatures in the World: And if there were no *Resurrection*, no *Future Rewards* for the Righteous, their Estimate of things would be just, and, by Consequence, Those who, under the Notion of being the *Servants of Christ*, *Abridge* themselves of *Worldly Comforts*, or pull down *Worldly Evils* upon their own Heads, if their *Hope in Christ* were only in this World, or if, while Here, they depended on *Him only for Worldly Blessings*, they would be indeed the most miserable of all Men. And this will appear very plainly if we consider only some Particulars of the Christian's Life.

1. The Sincere Christian has the hardest Work Incumbent upon Him of all others; He lives a Military Life under the severest Rules; for, though press'd with the greatest Difficulties, and fatigued with the most Unceasing Toils, He must be always upon his Guard Himself, for None, upon Earth, can relieve Him, or put themselves in his Place. His *Own* frail *Flesh* is treacherous and

and Rebellious, oft ready to hurry him headlong upon Sin, oft, like a subtle Traitor, ready to Lull him asleep in the midst of Dangers. He has the *World's Temptations*, too Natural and too agreeable to the Corrupt Inclinations of Humane Nature to Oppose and Conquer, and He has that equally *Angry* and *Vigilant Enemy* of Souls to resist.

When I have sometimes Reflected upon these things, and Consider'd what rough Service a Christian is to go through, and how little fit One, who is altogether compass'd himself with Infirmities, is to go through with it; It has made me think, that, certainly those who understand *St. Paul*, as not speaking of himself a *Regenerate Man*, but some poor *Unregenerate Wretch*, One meerly in the State of Nature, in the *latter part of the 7th to the Romans*, cannot know rightly *What it is to be a Christian*. The truly Regenerate Man is, above all others, sensible of the Infirmary of his Flesh, and of the Frequency of his Errours; He Observes carefully the Motions of *the Spirit*, and the Counter-Strugglings of the *Flesh*; He feels *the Law in his Members rebelling against the Law of his Mind*; he finds its Activity and Strength; How, upon the least fit of Negligence and Drowsiness, it *leads him Captive to the Laws of Sin and Death*: He finds how Easy it is to *Wish* to be Happy, to *Will* that which is *Good*, while He's under the Conduct of God's good Spirit; But how hard, how very hard it is to *do* that *Good* which He *would*, while He's incumbered with a Body not yet Sublim'd or Purify'd, as it shall be at the Resurrection. And the Best, the Holyest Christians whom I have ever been so happy as to Converse with, have always been making *St. Paul's* Complaint for themselves, and have frequently broke out into his Words upon the

same Grounds — *O Wretched Creatures that We are ! Who shall deliver us from the Body of this Death ? And I take the Experience of One Humble Understanding Christian to be a Better Commentary on St. Paul's Words in that Chapter, than all the trifling Sophistry of Socinus, Grotius, Episcopius, Curcellæus and their Followers laid together.*

Consider now what the Christian is to Do : He must give all Diligence to add to his Faith, Virtue ; to Virtue, Knowledge ; to Knowledge, Temperance ; to Temperance, Patience ; to Patience, Godliness ; to Godliness, Brotherly Kindness ; and to Brotherly Kindness, Charity. Consider what He must Actually Suffer, or be always ready to Suffer ; He must be eminent in Patience, in Afflictions, in Necessities, in Distresses, in Stripes, in Imprisonments, in Tumults, in Labours, in Watchings, in Fastings. Consider the Wise Good Man's Sense of the Incidents of Life, and the Weakness of Flesh and Blood ; And be sure, that all these Considerations together, will make the boldest and the strongest Christian living, long to be dissolv'd and to be with Christ, in that Seat of Peace and Bliss, where, the desperate Fight being Over, He may live in Eternal Triumphs with Him who Lov'd him.

2. The Christian thus terribly beset, when One would think He should have most of these Worldly Comforts and uninterrupted Pleasures allow'd him, is yet obliged, beyond all other Men to Deny himself —

Mat. xxvi. *He who will be my Disciple, says our Saviour, must deny Himself, and take up his Cross, and follow Me.*

1 Cor. vii. *Among Christians — Those who have Wives, ought to behave themselves as those who have None ; Those who Weep should be as though they wept not, and those who Rejoice as though they Rejoiced not, and they who Buy*

as

as though they possess'd not ; i. e. They must keep their Minds free and disengaged from every thing here below, Look upon themselves only as *Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth*, and be ready to part with every thing here when it stands in Composition with their Love to Christ, and when it may any way be prejudicial to the State of their Souls.

Thus the *Wealthy Christian* must not Indulge himself in Pride, Insolence, Effeminacy, Carelessness, Luxury, Gluttony, Drunkenness, Covetousness, Prodigality, &c. but must above others be exemplary in his Sobriety, Meekness, Humility, Bounty, Abstinence and Moderation in the Use of all God's Creatures. He who is of a *firm and strong Constitution*, must not be injurious to Others, Rapacious, Quarrellous, Rebellious, Obstinate: not mighty in Lust, mighty to pour down Wine and Strong-Drink, or to Oppress or Tyrannize over Others, though Bodily Strength be a mighty Incentive to such Crimes; But He must be Compassionate, ready rather to Receive than Do wrong; He must be Submissive, Flexible, Chast, Temperate and ready to Assist and Rescue those who Suffer by the Hands of such as are too strong for them. Those who are *great in Power and Authority*, to whom Multitudes Bow themselves down, where they have Power to Revenge themselves on all their Adversaries, must Deny themselves that Satisfaction, and be always ready to forgive the most provoking and irreclaimable of their Enemies, as *God, for Christ's sake*, is always ready to forgive them. And though in the time of the Churches general Calamity, a private Christian might revel and enjoy himself at large without Disturbance, or might secure his Life from Danger in a Stormy Season, by Thousand little Artificial Compliances, *He must Mourn with those who Mourn, and not love his Life even to the Death,*

Death, when the Glory of his Saviour is concern'd in his Sufferings. But all this would be *meer Frenzy*, if a *Better Resurrection* were not to be obtain'd at last; *Let us Eat and Drink for to Morrow we Die*, would, in such a Case, be the best and most rational Divinity a Man could Preach: and *Moses* would appear as a very weak Man in the World's Eye, who *chose rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy all the Treasures of Egypt*.

3. The *Christian* had need to have certain *Hopes* of a *Happy and Glorious Resurrection*, because, by his very *Profession*, He creates himself so many *Enemies among Men*.

John xv.

19.

Thus *our Saviour* forewarns his Followers; *If ye were of the World, the World would Love his Own; But because Ye are not of the World, but I have chosen You out of the World, therefore the World hateth You.* — It is not a *Christian's Innocence* which can secure him in this Case; Our Saviour was *perfectly Innocent*, *He did no Sin, neither was Guilt found in his Mouth*: Yet all the World almost was in a Rage against him; and it must needs have been so, un'e's all the World had been Converts to the Gospel, or Originally Innocent. A *Christian's Innocence* is very defective, yet, defective as it is, it reproveth the Profligate Part of the World, and a Man *extreamly Deform'd*, will be ready to break that Glass to pieces, which He never can cast his Eye on but He beholds a Monster.

Let us observe *Men openly Wicked*, or those Who are *Unsuspected Hypocrites*, both of them are, *Naturally, Enemies to the Sincere and Upright-Hearted Christian*; for no Man can observe the Difference between the true Christian and the vicious Man of Mode, but He must Condemn that miserable Worldling, whose Practices and Principles are neither Regular in themselves, nor have any Tendency to the Good of Others. But the Worldling is *Envious of his Glory* for whose sake He's Condemn'd, and will

will endeavour to thrust Him out of the World who will not let Wickedness be uppermost in it. The *Hypocrite* hates the *Man of Sincerity*, and when He fawns on him the most outwardly, Curses him in his Heart. Now *Hypocrites* and *Debauchees* in a great measure divide the World between them, and the Sheep of Christ are a *Little Little Flock*: of that it's no Wonder such *ravening Wolves* should be always ready to tear them in pieces.

Hence rose all those *bloody Persecutions* which made such Destruction of the Church of God. The *Covetous Wretch* found himself expos'd by the good Christian's *Liberality*; the *Slanderer* and *Liar* by his *Veracity* and *Tenderness* of the Reputation of others; the *Lustful Brute* by his *Chastity*; the *Thief* by his *Honesty* and *Fidelity*; the *Murderer*, the *Rebel*, the *Malicious Man* by his *Charity*, and *Peaceable*, and *Humble Temper*; The *Contemner of God's Ordinances and Service*, by his *Constant Piety and Devotion*; the *Profane Swearer*, the loose *Blasphemer* and *Perjur'd Wretch*, by his *Love of Truth* and *Careful Performance* of all his *Engagements*; the *Idolater*, by the *Truth and Spirituality* of his *Worship*; and the *Polytheist*, by his strict *Adherence* to the *One true God*. All who come under these Heads are *Enemies* so inveterate against the true *Christian*, that they must needs render the present World as uneasy to them, as the *Bondage of Egypt* was to the *Mourning Israelites*: But a *better Resurrection* will make amends for all these things, and of *this glorious Resurrection*, We, who are liable to *Mortality* here, have a *just and certain Hope*, through *Jesus Christ our Lord*.

This *Hope* is what bears up our otherwise-fainting Spirits, and makes us all pass with *Courage* through the *Miseries* of this wicked World, and this was that which was an *Anchor sure and steadfast* to the Soul of our *Dear Departed Brother*, whose *Funeral* We now *Attend*;

The Hope of a Future Life, the sole

tend : by *this* He rode fast among the Furies of a Stormy World, till He found Opportunity at last, with a favourable Gale, to make his *Port*, and Enter safely into the long'd-for Haven of Eternal Rest.

2 Cor. vi. 8. Dr. S. Symfon, the late Reverend and Worthy *Pastor* of this *Parish*, being call'd from hence by his *Master*, to receive the *Reward* of his *Pass'd Labours*, has given the Mournful Occasion of our Solemn Meeting at this time, and in this Sacred Place ; A Person, who, if ever any had the *Apostles* Lot, had it to the full, — *Having pass'd through Honour and Dishonour, through good Report and bad Report*. He has been *Honour'd* as *they* were, by Men who were themselves of the *best Principles* and the *clearest Reputation* ; and has had a *Good Report* in general from such as knew Him intimately, and the Credit of whose good Opinion will make his Memory valuable to Posterity ; To which too, that I may do right, I shall speak something of what I had my self from Him, and then wipe off that Dirt which others, for no good End, would throw upon Him.

His *Education*, when He began to be of a ripe Understanding, fell into those Times when *Sound Religion* and *Good Government* were persecuted to Death in these Nations ; When the true Church of Christ, with the Defender of that Faith profess'd in it, were both suffering upon the same Scaffold. His *Father*, A Man of shrew'd Politicks and a deep Fore-sight, though himself a *Malecontent* with both Civil and Ecclesiastical Government ; yet easily observing the Impossibility of a good Settlement of Matters in these Nations, unless all things return'd to their old Center ; took Care to instil such Principles into *his Son*, and to let him so far into the *Secret of the Times*, that whenever a Restauration of our Peace should be, by putting Things upon the former Bottom, he might fall in
with

Foundation of a Christian's Happiness.

with the Settlement, and do his Part to the Repairing of our Breaches; This was a Method follow'd by several other *prudent and Moderate Non-Conformists*, who were willing those Wounds should have been Heal'd, which they had unhappily made; and had the rest follow'd their good Examples, *Our Jerusalem had, e're this, been made the Joy of the whole Earth.*

Our *Deceas'd Brother* had, by his *Father's Care* and his *Own Inclination*, what Advantages were to be gain'd by *Foreign Education*, as well as that at *Home*, and had learnt *Submission and Obedience to his Superiours, in all things. Lawful and Honest*, the more perfectly by what He had Observ'd; He had Improv'd Himself in *good Learning*, He had laid before Himself a *good Scheme of Theological Principles*; was acquainted very well with *Men and Things*, and, as an Evidence of his Improvement, He has been the *Laborious, Faithful, and Orthodox Instructor* of those under his Charge in this Place, for more than *Forty Tears* together. His *Manner of Instruction by his Father* I had from his *own Mouth*; his *Personal Qualifications* I often have, and Others, who were Impartial and Unprejudiced, easily might observe in him.

If the *Ambassadors of Heaven* should pass without Abuses and Reproaches they would be too Happy, and the Kingdom of Darkness would be too much Retrench'd. But — *If Men have call'd the Master of the House, Beelzebub, How much more shall they call them of his Household?* Our *Deceased Brother* knew his Lot, and never Hoped that the *Disciple should be above his Master*, whom He knew to have been made perfect by Sufferings. What I have heard that he has been charged with, was —

Mat. x. 25.

1. That He was *too rigid a Conformist, a great Persecutor of Dissenters*, or one of those whom now a-days they Modishly call *A High-Flyer*. Now, by a *Rigid Conformist or High-Flyer*, I always understand a *down-right Honest Man, or One who, having upon sound Principles, Conform'd to the Liturgy, Discipline, and Government of the Establish'd Church of England, will neither be Decoy'd nor Hector'd out of his Duty, nor make a Friend, nor avoid an Enemy by wounding his own Conscience*: This is the Character of One whom the *Fetious Schismatics* of this Age mean by a *High-Flyer*; (for, as for Men of *profligate Lives and Scandalous Morals*, how high soever they may talk, Our Holy Mother, the Church of *England*, knows them not,) and if this must be his Charge, I'm sure that both the *Reverend Person* Deceas'd, and every *Faithful Minister of the Church of England*, will with *Job*, *Take it upon his Shoulder, and bind it as a Crown to Him*; such an Accusation is our Honour, and the more we had who would Deserve it, the more invidious our Happiness would be. I have had frequent Opportunities to Observe, That *those who are disaffected to the Church, will fix all the scandalous Characters they can upon a steady Conformist, in publick, yet own a great veneration for Him in Private, and where they can trust their Company*; while they publicly Cry up and Applaud the *Half Conformist, the Moderate Man*, as they call Him, when privately they despise and scorn him as a *Knave, a Man of no Principles, and One who deserves to be trusted by no Body*. Interest Dictates the first Part of the Character, Conscience the Last; And a Wise Man can never long doubt which to Chuse.

By *Persecuting Dissenters*, is meant, his endeavouring to bring them to *Submission to the Church in a Legal Way*. And this could never be wonder'd at from him,
wh

who had seen with his own Eyes, what Havock those Pretenders to *tender Conscience* had made both in Church and State. He was not to be impos'd upon by the Effrontery of *Modern Scriblers*: He *knew* the leading *Men* in our sad Confusions, and *He knew their Communication*. His *Father* had often inform'd him of that *deep Hypocrisy*, which, in those Days, walk'd about under the Disguise of *Holiness* and *Reformation*, and that his Certainty of it, made *him and Four* more, Countermine with all their Power, the Designs of the famous *Assembly at Westminster*, and happily blow up all their Hopes of settling *Presbyterian Government* in this Nation. If, upon this certain Knowledge, He us'd all Lawful Means to Reduce them, He did not go farther than the *Assembly* did with the *Five Brethren*, and the Burnt Child is too stupid who does not dread the Fire. Yet, on my own Knowledge, He was far from being an Enemy to the *truly Peaceable Dissenter*, nor did He go about to oblige them to Buy their Quiet at the Price of any wicked or unlawful Action.

2. He has been Charged as *Litigious*, or One apt to Quarrel with his People, i. e. Those who begin a Quarrel themselves, are very apt to Cry out first. If a Man of *no Religion* nor *Conscience* attempts an Encroachment either upon the *Church* or the *Incumbent*, and the Curate, in a Legal Way, either vindicates *Himself*, or the *Church*, He's a Litigious Man presently; must be Blacken'd, with all the Characters which Malice or Revenge can fix upon Him; He shall be treated with all the *Billingsgate* Language which a *Dung-hill Extract*, and suitable Breeding can furnish Ill Men with, though his Birth, his Education, his Calling, his Quality, nay and his Fortunes, are superior to theirs who treat him so, and the very Place where He's so Used, be Sa-

cred to God's Honour and to the Service of his Master, the Prince of Peace.

Whether this has been the Case of our *Reverend Brother Deceas'd* or not, I leave to every Man's own Conscience, and I leave them to Determine with themselves, whether it be agreeable to Christianity, after so many Years Faithful and Industrious Labours in his Vineyard, to use *Messenger of Christ* in such a Manner? Whether this be that *Honour* which is due to them for *their Work's sake*? Or whether it be not the Employment of the Prince of Darkness, to endeavour to Work up Infirm *Humane Nature* to shew it self, and then cruelly to accuse the Person who might sometimes be too weak for a Temptation.

I know there are some Men of so *Antichristian a Temper*, that they know not how to Sleep unless they can do *Mischief*; they are *Common Incendiaries*, and when Good Men speak to them of Peace, they presently make themselves ready to Battel; But they never think themselves happier than when they can abuse the Church, Expose Religion, and affront a Lawful Minister of the Gospel: But every good Christian will beware of such ill-temper'd Men. When the Ministers of the Gospel are despis'd, the Gospel it self, nay and the great Author of it are not much, if at all Esteem'd. And how can any one Imagine that an *Ambassador of Christ*, continually ruffled with Abuses and unworthy Treatment, can follow his *Studies* with Comfort, or do the *Duty of a Pastor* with Satisfaction.

I have often heard that *Worthy Man Deceas'd* Lamenting his own Condition upon this Account, That He has been forced to take up the *Arms of Law* against those who were more the Churches Enemies than his Own, and Commend the Temper of some Dissenters, as
favour-

favouring more of Christianity than that of *some who were willing to be thought Church-Men*. Yet among all his Complaints, He would acknowledge the Friendship and Christian Conduct of many of his Neighbours, but never lay that Load, which perhaps he justly might have done, upon his Enemies. If Passion shew'd him a Man, and forced him at any time to speak Unadvisedly with his Lips, He never thought Himself too Good to ask Pardon where he might have Offended; And though Ill Usage, and Old Age, and Encreasing Distempers, could not but embitter his Native Temper, and render it more peevish and Impatient, than otherwise it would have been, yet he'd often beg of God to pardon both himself and those who gave him the greatest Disturbance. Nor could any thing He met with put him by those *Charitable Designs* He had for the future Instruction and Edification of his Flock. But

3. He was Charg'd by some, who knew him very little, or not at all, as *Lazy in his Office and Covetous*, both of them, unquestionably, very great Crimes in a Minister of the Gospel. As for *Laziness*, He has left so much behind him that might abundantly acquit him of that Scandal, and prove him too a *voluminous Preacher*, as well as his Predecessour, had not his own Modesty forbidden that his Labours should any way become publick. And for *Covetousness*, None ever entertain'd his Friends with a more decent Freedom, or a Liberal and Hearty Welcome; I never found him of a close, hard, or grudging Temper, though the Usage He met with from Some, oblig'd him to *Good Husbandry*.

But He has for ever stopp'd the Mouth of Calumny in this Respect, by that *Noble Donation* He has made to
this

this *Parish* in his Generous *Endowment* of the *Rectory*. He had often express'd his Trouble for the *Dependent State* of too many of the Clergy, He had seen how it had forced too many rather to Preach what might Please than what might Profit, and that, in the Beginning of the *Great Rebellion*, that very *Dependence* had made *Lecturers* the Common *Boutefeus* of this Kingdom; And could not but Consider, That if Ill Men could give *him* so much Uneasiness, who had so much to strengthen him besides his Income as *Rector* here, they'd wholly trample upon *Another* who had nothing but the mean *Endowment* of so *small a Benefice* to support Him.

These Considerations and his *Sincere Love* to *Religion*, to the *Church of England* as by Law Establish'd, and to his *Dear Flock*, how little soever some of them might Esteem of Him, made him Settle, in his *last Will and Testament*, Eighty Pounds *per Annum*, as an *Augmentation to the Benefice*, and a happy *Support and Encouragement* to those who shall, hereafter, be entrusted in this Place with the Care of Souls. A *Gift* so Free and Generous, so just an Acknowledgement of God's Goodness, who had blessed him, in spite of all the Crosses He met with here below, with so fair a Portion, that I doubt not but that *this Offering to God* will bring down a Blessing upon whatever beside he has bequeath'd to his Relations.

Nor did He altogether forget the *Poor*, though the Observation He had made of some *Unjustifiable Practices*, with Relation to Moneys Charitably Given or Collected for them, made him the *more sparing* in his Gift; and indeed the *Abuse* of such Charity is generally so notorious, and the *Poor* so little the Better for the *Bounty of their Benefactors*, that it has been a mighty Discouragement

agement to those who else had allotted large Portions for their Subsistence; yet has He bequeath'd Fifty Shillings *per Annum* for ever, to be given them in *Bread*, enough to encourage *Others* to follow his Example, and to persuade those *entrusted* with such Legacies, to be always *Good Husbands for the Poor*.

Here then He has shew'd his *Love* both to the *Bodies* and *Souls* of his *Parishioners*, and when they see a *Faithful Shepherd* standing up in their *late Worthy Pastor's* Room, of which He thought he had taken a fitting Care; when they hear him *Preaching the Word in Season and out of Season*; when they see him *Couragious* and *Cheerful* in his *great Master's* Work, and above the *Smiles* or *Frowns* of Men, let them Bless his Memory who has made so *worthy a Provision* for their *Teacher*, and has set him above *Contempt* and *Want*; that He may Study, Preach, Pray, and Practise all Pastoral Duties among them with Comfort and Security.

The *Love of God*, of his *Church*, his *House*, his *Servants* constrain'd our *Worthy Deceas'd Brother* to do these things, and by things, *He being Dead yet Speaketh*. He teaches *Us* all, as *He* did, to fix our *Hopes in Christ*, with respect to a glorious Resurrection: While He had *that* in his Eye, He could Resign his Soul to his Maker with Pleasure in the midst of Pain, and having made his *Peace with God*, and being in the *Peace of the Church*, spent his *last Hours* in her *Prayers*, and his *last Moments* in a sure and certain Hope of the Resurrection to Eternal Life and Happiness.

May We all, when our *great Master* Summons Us to appear before him, *be found so doing*; May the Prospect of Heavenly Joys make us sit loose to every thing here below, not to *Love the Vanities*, nor to *fear the Terrours of this World*, but in *Patience* to possess our
Souls;

Souls; To which End let us All meekly beseech our Heavenly Father, to Raise Us from the Death of Sin unto the Life of Righteousness by his All-powerful Grace, that when We shall depart this Life, We may rest in him as our Hope is this our Brother doth; and that at the general Resurrection We may be found Acceptable in his Sight, and receive that Blessing which He shall then pronounce to all who love and fear him, saying — Come Ye blessed of my Father! receive the Kingdom prepar'd for You from the Beginning of the World.

Grant this we beseech thee O Merciful Father,
through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer.
Amen! Amen!



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